



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
Rock Island District

# ILLINOIS RIVER BASIN RESTORATION SECTION 519, WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2000



February 2006

## CORPS OF ENGINEERS & DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES COMPLETE DRAFT PLAN

The loss of habitat and system degradation throughout the Illinois River Basin has long been documented. In particular, the Illinois River Basin has experienced the loss of ecological integrity due to sedimentation of backwaters and side channels, degradation of tributary streams, increased water level fluctuations, reduction of floodplain and tributary connectivity, and other adverse impacts caused by human activities.

As a result, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District (Corps), and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) entered into a cost-sharing agreement in August 2000 and, with other agencies, identified opportunities for ecosystem restoration in the Illinois River Basin.

The study is now complete and the findings are contained in the Draft Illinois River Basin Restoration Comprehensive Plan. The team identified six ecosystem restoration goals and evaluated eight alternatives, including the no action alternative. The attached brochure summarizes the problems and proposed solutions for each of the goals. The plan includes the study team's draft recommendation for a phased implementation of Alternative 6. This draft recommendation is now subject to public and agency review and comment.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

We are now in the public review period for the Draft Illinois River Basin Restoration Comprehensive Plan. The plan is available for viewing in several ways.

The plan is posted on the Rock Island District website at <http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/ILRiverEco/default.htm>.

A paper copy of the plan will soon be located at public libraries in Beardstown, Bloomington, Chicago (Harold Washington Library Center), Galesburg, Havana, Jerseyville, Joliet, Kankakee, Macomb, Mount Sterling, Naperville (Nichols Library), Oswego, Ottawa, Peoria, Pontiac, Springfield (Lincoln Library, Main Branch), and Watseka.

A CD of the report may be requested by calling Ms. Sue Simmons, Corps of Engineers, at 309-794-5573.

Public comments on the draft recommended plan will be accepted through April 14, 2006. Comments may be submitted via a link on the website, by mail (see Project Manager Brad Thompson's mailing address on the attached brochure), or by attending a public meeting and completing a comment sheet.

### MARCH 2006 PUBLIC MEETINGS PLANNED

From November 2000 through February 2001, the Corps and the DNR hosted seven public open houses to discuss with the public the purpose of the ecosystem restoration study and the range of alternatives for restoring the environment in the Illinois River Watershed, and to gather public comments on the alternatives and problems in the area.

In December 2003, the Corps and the DNR held four public meetings to discuss the draft alternatives being considered at that point in the study and the level of restoration for areas within the Illinois River Basin, and to gather the public's comments on the draft alternatives.

The Corps and the DNR have now developed a draft recommended plan to restore the ecosystem in the Illinois River Basin. *You are invited to attend* a public meeting in March to discuss and provide feedback on the draft plan.

Meetings will be held from 2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. The meeting format will be identical at each location.

Corps of Engineers and Illinois Department of Natural Resources staff will be present to speak to the public one-on-one. Doors will open in the afternoon at 2 p.m., with a formal presentation at 2:30 p.m. A question and answer session will follow the presentation until 4 p.m. Doors will open again at 6 p.m., and the formal presentation will begin at 6:30 p.m. The question and answer session will follow until 8 p.m.

Meeting information follows:

Tuesday, March 7

Starved Rock Lodge and Conference Center  
LaSalle Room  
Starved Rock State Park  
Route 178 and Route 71  
Utica, Illinois  
815-667-4211

Wednesday, March 8

Hilton Garden Inn  
Rock Creek Ballroom  
455 Riverstone Parkway  
Kankakee, Illinois  
815-932-4444

Thursday, March 9

Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites  
Meeting Room  
2055 Weisbrook Drive  
Oswego, Illinois  
630-844-4700

Tuesday, March 14

Gateway Center  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room  
200 Northeast Water Street  
Peoria, Illinois  
309-689-3019

Wednesday, March 15

Pere Marquette State Park  
Marquette and Piasa Rooms  
13653 Lodge Boulevard  
Grafton, Illinois  
618-786-2331

Thursday, March 16

Dickson Mounds Museum  
Activity Room (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)  
10956 North Dickson Mounds Road  
Lewistown, Illinois  
309-547-3721

All members of the public are encouraged to attend one of the meetings and to provide comments on the draft recommended plan. If you are unable to attend a meeting, please use the link on study's website at <http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/ILRiverEco/default.htm> to submit your comments. Comments will be accepted through April 14, 2006.

If you are aware of someone who did not receive a copy of this announcement, please invite him or her to attend one of the meetings.

**WHAT'S NEXT?**

After the public review period is closed, the study team will review agency and public comments and consider them in the final report. The finalized report will be submitted to the Corps of Engineers' higher headquarters in Washington, DC, for approval.

***WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE PUBLIC MEETINGS***